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STUART HALL AND 'RACE'

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INTRODUCTION

Stuart Hall and 'race'

This introductory paper seeks to locate Stuart Hall's writing on 'race' and ethnicity in the broader context of his work and life. The paper seeks to examine Hall's significance as one of the most important theorists of race globally, and as a theorist of Black Britain, before exploring the intersection of the personal and political dimensions of his work. The paper finally considers the continuities of Hall's writing on race and considers the implications of this for 'illuminating Dark Times'. It serves also as background and introduction to the papers included in this special issue.

Keywords Stuart Hall; 'race'; Black Britain; cultural studies; new ethnicities

I'm interested in deep change, but I don't think intellectual work should be short-changed to prove a political point. To point towards complexity, ambiguity, unexpected consequences – that's intellectual vocation.

(Stuart Hall in Jaggi 2000)

In April 1994, while visiting an old college friend at Princeton University, I attended the *Race Matters* conference, held to mark the (as it turned out, comparatively short-lived) departure of Cornel West to Harvard. The conference was a veritable Who's Who of the African-American Academy – from West himself, to Toni Morrison, Manning Marable, Patricia Williams and Angela Davis. At the end of the opening panel, the floor was opened to questions and comments. The first speaker moved through the crowded audience to the microphone and quietly introduced himself – 'Stuart Hall, The Open University'. The room exploded into applause. It was the only time I have ever witnessed someone getting a standing ovation for simply saying their name. When I remarked on this later to Cornel West, he told me – 'The thing you have to understand, Claire, is that we all grew up reading Stuart. We wouldn't be here without him. We all stand on his shoulders'.

It is almost impossible to overestimate the significance of Stuart Hall in shaping the field of racial and ethnic studies in the past four decades. Both personally and in the body of his work, Hall has been a foundational figure for scholars in Britain, the US, the Caribbean and beyond, in opening new avenues for thinking about race, politics, culture and identity. From his seminal intervention *Policing the Crisis* (Hall *et al.* 1978) through his work on race and class, and race and the state, to his more recent theorizations around 'new ethnicities' and 'the politics of difference', Hall's writing has redefined the ways in which race research is thought and done. Henry Louis Gates has described Stuart in the *New Yorker* as 'black Britain's leading theorist of black Britain' (cited in Jaggi 2000), while Maya Jaggi, in her insightful interview with Hall in *The Guardian* (8 July 2000), describes him simply as a 'black icon'. Certainly for many of us, who grew up in the turbulent years of the 1970s and early 1980s in Britain, when the casual everyday racism of sitcom *Love Thy Neighbour* was the pinnacle of commentary on race relations, and when the only faces of colour on television were Rudolph Walker (in *Love Thy Neighbour*), Art Malik (in Paul Scott's Raj nostalgia-fest *Jewel in the Crown*) and Bob Monkhouse's assistant Ayesha on Sunday teatime gameshow *The Golden Shot*, Stuart Hall's public presence – whether in the late night BBC2 Open University programmes, or his critical interventions into the debates raging on race across a range of news media – was one which left an indelible imprint on a generation of British black and Asian people that might justifiably be labelled iconic (though it is likely Hall himself would balk at the attribution). His impact as a scholar, and as an 'enabler' (Jaggi 2000) of the work of other, particularly minority, academics, artists and filmmakers is unique in the British academy, and instrumental in both constituting race and ethnicity as a legitimate (and later central) arena of research and in redefining its parameters. Hall's tenure at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham (1968–1979), for example, saw not only the publication of *Policing the Crisis*, but also brought together a cohort of students who would go on to explode traditional approaches to the study of race, most notably in the collection *The Empire Strikes Back* (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982), which included contributions from Paul Gilroy, Hazel Carby (see this issue) and John Solomos. For those of us coming later, Stuart Hall has not only provided conceptual frameworks and innovations to think with (and occasionally against), but has been a measure of what intellectual work can and should be (for). For myself, Hazel Carby's words in her evocative contribution in this issue capture this strong and complex sense of indebtedness:

The extraordinarily rich proliferation of ideas, political insights and historical paradigms ... to be found in Stuart Hall's publications and lectures signpost the 'detour' I have travelled for my entire academic and activist career. Hall's political commitment and vision and, above all,

his political and intellectual integrity is the bass line in the rhythm of my walk.

Recent years have seen a slew of publications exploring Hall's work, primarily around his contribution to the development of cultural studies (Rojek 2003, Davis 2004, Procter 2004, Meeks 2007). However, there has been surprisingly little concentrated critical engagement with Hall's theories of race and ethnicity. This may perhaps be partly due to the nature of Hall's work itself, which has taken the form of a series of short articles, increasingly based on talks and lectures, rather than a sustained and developed theoretical critique – David Scott has commented that 'Stuart is less the author of books than the author of *interventions*' (2005, p.3, original emphasis). Hall's focus is very much on the present – on what he terms 'the contradictory, stony ground of the present conjuncture' (Taylor 2006) – and on the strategies needed to intervene in this space: Scott continues, 'One has the sense of him always thinking on his feet, thinking from where he is, thinking out loud, making it up . . . as he goes along. Consequently . . . you won't find him just where you left him moments ago, thinking the same thoughts in exactly the same way' (Scott 2005, p. 4). This partly reflects Hall's insistence on the role of theory, which is 'exactly like a box of tools' (Deleuze, cited in Scott 2005, p. 10) a way of opening up questions and understanding rather than an endpoint, and, therefore, necessarily shifting (Grossberg 2007). Grossberg quotes Hall himself 'this may be theoretical work of a seemingly loose kind, porous but not without rigor. It is always connected to the specifics of a concrete moment' (2007, p. 99) while Scott describes Hall as 'pre-eminently, a theorist of the present' (2000, p. 283).¹

This view of theory as a toolbox is perhaps reflected in the way in which Hall's work itself has been used: many of us have raided these theoretical insights and applied them to our own empirical or conceptual agendas, spaces and questions. While this has given rise to innovative and important work that has taken Hall's insights to new times, places and people, too often this process has stripped the depth and complexity of the originals, reducing them to a form of conceptual shorthand or convenient, oft rehearsed and repeated epigrams that substitute for rigorous analysis – more a store cupboard than a toolbox. Keyan Tomaselli has commented: 'Whilst the impact of Hall's work globally has been astonishing . . . there is always the danger in our corporatising academic practices of Hall himself being "consumed", his writings used for quotable quotes, for opportunistic conceptual legitimisation, with his ideas being taken as given, rather than being constantly tested, engaged and applied' (2000, p. 384).

The current Special Issue takes seriously both Hall's contribution as a theorist of race and ethnicity, and the need to engage critically with his work, to consider the changing contours of the present conjuncture and to reflect on

the historical, spatial and personal specificities that Hall's work illuminates. The papers included here use Hall's work as a way of reflecting back on the moments that have shaped the current terrain and of opening up new questions. They share an acknowledgement of the debt so many of us owe to Stuart Hall, personally and intellectually, and a desire to unsettle the increasing commoditization of his work, to think through the challenges that it poses and the ways in which it can be taken forward as 'illumination for Dark Times' (Scott 2005, p. 2). The issue deliberately carves out Hall's work on 'race' from its broader context, recognizing the closures this necessitates, but hoping also to shed new light on what are Hall's most challenging (and, perhaps ironically, most taken for granted) interventions. Reflecting the main site of Hall's intellectual labours, the contributors are primarily from Britain, although the range of papers reflect the global networks that this location necessarily captures. The papers both look backwards – at issues of memory, nation and belonging (Carby), or at the silences of cultural studies (Harris); forwards – to the emergence of 'new ethnicities' in cyberspace (Parker and Song); sideways – at the significance of Hall's early work to understanding the 'political theology' of race in South Africa (Goldberg), or to understanding the contemporary city (Keith); and in dialogue – with notions of post-colonial subjectivity (Narayan) and the politics of identity/difference (St Louis). The authors also span the trajectory of Hall's work, from the early, definitive contributions on Gramsci, and 'Race and Articulation' (Goldberg), and the development of cultural studies (Harris), to the more recent reflections on 'new ethnicities' (St Louis, Parker and Song), nation, diaspora and identity (Narayan, St. Louis, Carby) and multiculturalism (Keith), as well as reflecting the different generations of scholars who have been shaped by Hall's influence and thinking.

The remainder of this introductory piece is an attempt to locate Stuart Hall, and his work on race and ethnicity, within a broader intellectual and global context. Chris Rojek has commented in the acknowledgements to his 2003 book that 'The Stuart Hall that emerges in these pages is *my* Hall, full of the partialities of perspectives that one brings to the task of engaging with the work of a still living writer' (2003, p. ix), and – while many would find it hard to recognize Rojek's Hall in what is a rather mean spirited and irritable text – the comment is one that resonates with anyone faced with the enormity of capturing even a partial and fleeting sense of Hall's persona and body of work. My own engagement with Hall's work has been foundational in shaping my work, and even before this – in many ways, as a child of the 1970s and a teenager in 1980s Thatcherite Britain, I grew up with Stuart Hall. His work on the racialization of mugging and later on 'new ethnicities' – representation and experience, structure and agency – constitute the parameters within which my work takes shape and both the personal and intellectual contours of these

encounters have no doubt left its imprint on this project: what follows is *my* Stuart Hall.

Locating Stuart Hall

It is a testament to Stuart Hall's international reputation and the influence of his work that he was, to my recollection, one of the very few non-Americans invited to speak at the *Race Matters* conference, and indeed one of only a small handful of British academics to have had any significant impact on the American academy around issues of 'race' – an achievement the more remarkable given his refusal to move to the US for any length of time, preferring as Hall himself has claimed to '[take] a sighting on the world from the periphery rather than the centre' (Jaggi 2000). That Hall's reputation and influence crosses boundaries – national and disciplinary – is unquestionable, as anyone who has endeavoured to gain an oversight of his intellectual contribution over the past four (plus) decades will be only too aware: the *Without Guarantees* volume that was published in 2000, three years after his retirement from the Open University, spans contributions from not only the UK and US, but also Australia, the Caribbean, Korea, Japan, India, Taiwan, Mexico, Southern Africa, reflecting on and thinking with his contributions in cultural studies, media and film studies, black/race studies, post-colonial studies, psychology, literature, history, sociology, politics, social policy and education (Gilroy *et al.* 2000). The UWI Mona Library website (www.mona.uwi.edu/library/stuart_hall) lists, chronologically from 1957 to 2004, (an acknowledgedly incomplete) 317 separate publications, reflecting the broad span of Hall's career, from the early editorials in *Universities and Left Review*, and later the *New Left Review* (Schwarz 2007), to the teaching materials written at the Open University, as well as the journal articles, interviews and books that have provided critical intellectual interventions in the academy, and beyond. The subject matter ranges from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1960) to 'The world of the gossip column' (1967), from 'Marx's notes on method' (1974)² to *The Popular Arts* (1964),³ from *The Young Englanders* (1967) to 'Black Britons' (1970), and from the seminal *Policing the Crisis* (Hall *et al.* 1978) to the paradigm shattering 'New Ethnicities' ([1988] 1992).

Even a cursory glance through this listing yields a sense of the defining features of Hall's work – the eclectic and encompassing engagement with all aspects of cultural life, the preference for collaborative production and for short, critical interventions into theoretical and political endeavour (Rustin 2007), the commitment to teaching and the expansion of the intellectual realm to the everyday. The policy and government papers testify to Hall's reputation outside the academy, and to his long standing commitment to social change – from the *Young Englanders* of 1967 (for the National Committee of

Commonwealth Immigrants) to the influential *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* of 2000 (for the Runnymede Trust; Parekh 2000) – the reprints and translations testify to the importance of these interventions across time and space. The same website also lists 129 Invited Lectures and Conference papers between 1982 and 2003, from Cambridge University to the University of the West Indies, from the British Film Institute to UNESCO, from the Arts Council to Haringey Council – a list which gives some sense of Hall's reputation as an orator.⁴ It does not even attempt to list Hall's innumerable press, radio and television appearances – from *Newsnight* to *Desert Island Discs* – which have made him a recognizable figure in many households in the UK, and internationally, and which have placed him as one of Britain's few *truly* public intellectuals.

This latter role is, I think, one which is often minimized in academic accounts of Hall's work (Rojek 2003, Davis 2004, Procter 2004), but is central to understanding both his intellectual choices and his wider importance (Farred 2003, Scott 2005); it points to Hall's insistence on the inseparability of intellectual and political life (Rustin 2007), on the paramount necessity of communication of ideas to as wide an audience as possible, and the provocation to thinking and acting differently – what Henry Giroux has termed 'critical public pedagogy' (2000). As Hall himself commented in a 2006 interview with Laurie Taylor:

I am a pessimist of the intellect and an optimist of the will. I do think you have to analyse the things that are in front of you and try to understand how they really are and not how you would like them to be. And then try to find out what the possibilities are for change and work with those. Yes, that is my strategy.

Paradoxically, given the scope of his influence and reputation, Stuart Hall is at the same time a 'peculiarly' [to misuse Paul Gilroy's evocative (1993) phrase] British/English scholar; someone whose intellectual formation and writing has, to a large extent, taken shape first in the Anglicized colonial education system of Jamaica, and then in the social, cultural and political transformations of a multicultural and post-colonial UK. Hall has located himself primarily within this specific chosen national and historical context – within what he terms '*our* island story' (Jaggi 2000, emphasis added), or, more wryly, as 'in the belly of the beast' (cited in Davis 2004, p. 191). His work reflects the concentrated focus on 'the problem which is here, not over there' (Hall, in Davis 2004, p. 195), whether that problem is the rise of Thatcherism, the failures of New Labour (Taylor 2006) or the 'Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain' (Parekh 2000), concerns underpinned by a commitment to the changing politics of the British Left. His positioning as one of the founding fathers of British Cultural Studies has undoubtedly cemented this reputation – it is indicative of this positioning

that each of the three British books on Hall's work published in recent years start from, and end with, this definition of Hall's significance (Rojek 2003, Davis 2004, Procter 2004), while Grant Farred has described Stuart Hall as 'the incarnation of cultural studies . . . widely anointed as the spokesman for the politics – and the endemic politicization – of the popular, the theorist in the forefront of politicizing (all) identity' (2003, p. 168).

It is, paradoxically, this association with British Cultural Studies – its transformation under Hall's directorship of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies and its subsequent global takeover – that is both the foundation of Hall's reputation internationally and, for some at least, his primary limitation. Rojek (2003) for example, notes that Hall has been criticized for 'modishness' (Eagleton 1996), for 'latent insularity' (Hartley 1996) and 'a preoccupation with British questions' (Hartley 1996) – what Rojek himself labels, ambiguously, as 'The Problem of "Englishness"' (2003, p. 29).⁵ Certainly, it can be argued that cultural studies emerged out of what Hall has termed the 'caesura' (Hall 1996, p. 32) of three foundational thinkers and texts – Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1958), Raymond William's *Culture and Society* (1958) and E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) – who/which were centrally concerned with notions of English culture albeit, like Hall himself, from a position on the margins (Hall 1996a).⁶ Hall's relationship to Englishness has, however, been an inherently ambivalent one: as he told Kuan-Hsing Chen 'Having been prepared by the colonial education, I knew England from the inside. But I'm not and will never be English' (1996b, p. 490).

Hall arrived at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, then under the directorship of Richard Hoggart, in 1964 and took over as director in 1968, shifting the way cultural studies was thought and done in decisive ways. Rojek quotes Richard Hoggart's 'laconic' take on the shift as making cultural studies 'a) more political and b) more theoretic' (2003, p. 66), and certainly the influence of structuralism and Gramsci opened up the questions of culture to issues of power, contestation and resistance in important ways. While the focus of much of the Centre's work was on class, most famously its work on youth subcultures (as with *Resistance through Rituals*, published in 1976) (Hall 1996a), space was also opened up, often painfully, for the discussion of gender (Hall 1996b, Blunsdon 1996) and, to a lesser extent, race⁷ (Hall 1996d, Grossberg 2007). However contested this history, Hall's presence, and his ambiguous relationship to notions of Britishness, also challenged the national boundaries of cultural studies and paved the way for both the consolidation and the globalization of cultural studies as a field.⁸ Paul Gilroy has commented on the development of cultural studies, 'Stuart was the fourth figure; his postcolonial formation and experience of migrancy, and his attention to race, gave the critical understanding of the workings of England a very different slant' (Jaggi 2000). Hall tells Back, in his interview in this issue, that 'cultural

studies began ... with my tussle to come to terms with that experience, which is when I first discovered I was a black intellectual'. Elsewhere Hall has similarly stated, 'Thinking about my own sense of identity, I realize that it has always depended on the fact of being a *migrant*, on the *difference* from the rest of you ... the colonized subject is always "somewhere else": doubly marginalized, displaced, always *other* than where he or she is, or is able to speak from' ([1987] 1996c, pp. 114–115, original emphasis).

The sense of being always 'other' is one which defines, and perhaps accounts for, Hall's consistent engagement with idea(l)s of nationhood and belonging throughout his intellectual career. Indeed, it is the desire to contest, to pry open, essentialized claims of national identity – to find a space for the 'others' in the national imaginary – that links the early work on immigration with his critiques of Thatcher and of 'New Times' and that powered his controversial 'Rethinking the National Story' in *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (Parekh 2000), and his analysis of 'The Multicultural Question' (Hall 2000a). His challenge has always been to write 'the margins into the centre, the outside into the inside ... a more global version of our island story' (quoted in Jaggi 2000), to re-imagine Britishness 'in a more profoundly inclusive manner' (quoted in Jaggi 2000) and to insist on the constitutive role of the history of Empire and diaspora – of 'the sugar you stir' (Hall 1978, p. 25) – at the heart of the nation. The sense of dislocation, from both his place of birth and his place of settlement, runs through the heart of Hall's work: he comments, 'that's exactly the diasporic experience, far enough to experience the sense of exile and loss, close enough to understand the enigma of an always-postponed "arrival"' (1996b, p. 490). It underpins his fascinated concern with the experiences of the second generation of Black Britons, both in the recognition of their exclusion and their sense of entitlement: Hall writes in 'Minimal Selves' (1996c, p. 114):

I've been puzzled by the fact that young black people today are marginalized, fragmented, unenfranchized, disadvantaged and dispersed. And yet, they look as if they own the territory. Somehow they too, in spite of everything are centred, in place ... they occupy a new kind of space at the centre.

The focus on culture and on identities as situated, imagined and multiple clearly reflects this personal, as well as intellectual, positioning: Hall's later work [from 'Minimal Selves' (1996c) onwards, revealingly entwines the personal, the political and the intellectual – 'I learned about culture, first, as something which is deeply subjective and personal, and at the same moment, as a structure you live' (1996b, p. 488). It is tempting too to see Hall's most recent explorations of diaspora as a way of claiming a space in which he can reconcile these divergent, sometimes opposing, pulls, most particularly in his

fraught relationship with his family home(land) Jamaica – ‘I am able to write about it now because I’m at the end of a long journey . . . it has taken me fifty years to come home . . . It was the space I couldn’t occupy, a space I had to learn to occupy’ (1996b, p. 489). Poignantly, Hall comments ‘I ache for a parallel life I could have lived’ (Jaggi 2000, see also Hall’s interview, this issue). It is fitting, then, that in 2004 the University of the West Indies held an international conference in Stuart Hall’s honour⁹ that brought together scholars from the UK, US and across the Caribbean to celebrate the ‘Return of a Native Son’ (Meeks 2007).

Racing Stuart Hall: the ambiguous burden of representation

Partly because of the longevity and range of his work, and perhaps partly because of his sense of unease at being positioned in any way, Stuart Hall remains a determinedly elusive figure, yet one who is nevertheless claimed and reinvented in a number of ways. Hall himself has commented of cultural studies that ‘I sometimes feel like a *tableau vivant*, a spirit of the past resurrected’ (1996d, p. 262), while Terry Eagleton has commented that ‘anyone writing a novel about the British intellectual left, who began by looking around for some exemplary figure to link its various trends and phases, would find themselves spontaneously reinventing Stuart Hall’ (cited in Procter 2004, p. 3). Hall has both acknowledged and resisted such positionings, observing:

I want to absolve myself of the many burdens of representation which people carry around – I carry around at least three: I’m expected to speak for the entire black race on all questions theoretical, critical etc, and sometimes for British politics, as well as for cultural studies. This is what’s known as the black person’s burden.

(Hall 1996d, p. 263)

It is the first of these positionings – that of race – that has been, in Britain at least, one of the most vexed. It is interesting to reflect, for example, that Gates’ description of Hall, cited earlier, as ‘black Britain’s leading theorist of black Britain’ is likely to be viewed by many British academics as a narrow, constraining and even dismissive description of his influence and impact. In the several recent overviews of his work mentioned earlier, the issue of both Hall’s raced identity and his impact on the study of race sit uncomfortably amidst the discussion of his role as the progenitor of cultural studies, as the leading figure of the New Left, the critic of first Thatcher and then Blair, his formative work on issues of media and representation, the encounter with Marx, Althusser and Gramsci. Helen Davis writes in her introduction to *Understanding Stuart Hall*,

'Hall did not begin his work with considerations of ethnicity and race. His has been a long journey of (self) discovery' (2004, p. 3). James Procter comments, rather unreflectively, 'Cultural studies *takes on a different complexion* when viewed from the perspective of Hall's early life' (2004, p. 5, emphasis added), yet Hall's engagement with issues of race and ethnicity, in this otherwise insightful text, remain strangely distanced from Hall himself, and from his involvement with the black diaspora in Britain for over 50 years. Procter positions Hall's raced identity simply as a question of origins – it is his Caribbean childhood that forms his 'intellectual preoccupation with class, race and identity politics' (Procter 2004, p. 5). Similarly Rojek pronounces 'In ... trying to trace through the many complex threads of the shifts of emphasis in his intellectual position over the years, I have reached the conclusion that Hall's background in Jamaica must be confronted' (2003, p. 47). However, Rojek freezes the development of this undoubtedly – and for Hall, avowedly (Hall 1996b, 1996c) – formative moment within the Caribbean of Hall's childhood, within local "'brown man"/"black man" frictions' (Rojek 2003), and within the tensions of a family life scarred by colonial colour hierarchies¹⁰ – it is a personal, rather than political, engagement. As Bill Schwarz has noted in response, 'Rojek can't allow himself to reflect upon the complex movements back and forth between the Caribbean and Britain ... Not only does this ignore the Caribbean elements in Hall's intellectual life in the fifties; it ignores his continuing developments with Caribbean organisations in Britain through the 1960s and beyond' (2005, p. 196).¹¹ It is perhaps a sign of this discomfort that Rojek's otherwise richly detailed intellectual history spares a cursory 11 pages to discuss the work on race, ethnicity and post-coloniality, which has dominated the past 20 years of Hall's intellectual life.¹²

In contrast, Grant Farred, in his account of Hall's early life and work, argues that Hall's Jamaican class privilege enabled his 'postponement of his engagement with race' in Britain (2007, p. 152) for nearly two decades. For Farred, Hall's journey *into* blackness is forged in the turbulence of the 1970s, and in solidarity with the emerging second generation of Black Britons, through which Hall 'achieves vernacularity by turning for the first time to/ward blackness ... a location within a community that is ... substantively new and unknown (2007, pp. 194–195). In some ways, Farred's view of Hall's 'becoming black' is one which resonates with Hall's own narration of his own awakening 'black' identity. As a brown skinned, middle class 'scholarship boy' (Farred 2003) turned Rhodes scholar, Hall has commented that his involvement with anti-colonial politics, and then with the New Left, from his arrival in Oxford in 1951 through to the 1970s, subsumed any easy identification with 'race' (Hall 1996b): he tells Davis:

So the socialist movement subsumes all those questions, it's the moment of my least identification. It's not until after the New Left, when I'm

aware that the West Indians I have seen trickling into London in the 1950s, are going to be a substantial number, and that they're going to be staying here, that they are a new diaspora, and that the questions of cultural identity and all of that which I think I've now left behind, and I can't stand them, are here!

(Davis 2004, p. 194)

However, where for Farred (as indeed for Rojek and Procter), Hall's raced identity is a belated realization of a pre-existing, epidermally rooted blackness, Hall himself characteristically points to the emergence of the *possibility* of a 'black' identity within a specific historical moment:

The fact is 'black' has never just been there either. It has always been an unstable identity, psychically, culturally, and politically. It, too, is a narrative, a story, a history. Something constructed, told, spoken, not simply found . . . black is an identity which had to be learned and could only be learned in a certain moment.

(Hall [1987] 1996c, p. 116)

The struggle over Hall's raced identity (to be or not to be black?) speaks to wider uncertainties about how to locate his work on 'race' within the broader context of his thought and writing. Gail Lewis, in a challenging article on 'Stuart Hall and Social Policy' (2000) has noted that Hall is often narrowly (mis)understood as a primarily theorist of race (for which read 'black people/issues') and that this is linked to his embodied identity, 'as an embodied intellectual Hall has been ensnared . . . in his own blackness so that what he speaks – however eloquently – is understood as only being about blackness, about black peoples in Britain, only relevant when these peoples are explicitly there: visible' (2000, p. 194). For others, blackness is something which Hall transcends, with his work on 'race' a minor – sometimes discordant (Rojek 2003) – theme in a richer canon, an occasional interest that surfaces briefly with *Policing the Crisis* in 1978 and then disappears until the turn to (personal/cultural) identity in the late 1980s. While the former position necessarily reduces the scope, depth and impact of Hall's interventions, the latter erases his long and active commitment to issues of racial equality and the black public sphere. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Hall is probably best understood as occupying a space (rather than a position) between these two characterizations – 'both/and' rather than 'either/or' (see Grossberg 2007). Despite Hall's own reticence about his relationship to black community and politics – which is probably to be expected in someone who has been critical of the nature of these claims-staking for the past 20 years – the formative nature of this engagement, even from the early days in Oxford when he played in a jazz band (Jaggi 2000) and 'discovered, for the first time, that we were "West Indians"' (Hall 1996b, p. 492), can be clearly traced. As a supply teacher in south

London, when he walked black pupils home from school to prevent them being attacked, and was caught up in the tensions which led to the Notting Hill riots (1958) (see Hall's interview, this issue), and in his later move to Birmingham in 1964 (in the midst of the notorious Smethwick by-election),¹³ Hall was acutely aware of, and involved with, the problems of the newly immigrant black communities:

I was aware of the bubbling up of race into politics. There were problems of housing, racial discrimination, policing, the 'sus' laws; a second generation feeling that they neither belonged in England nor anywhere else; the influence of reggae and Rastafarianism. It was impossible to be active and alive in Birmingham without being drawn into all that.

(Jaggi 2000)

Hall's sense of his own identity as raced emerges alongside, or as part of, a series of new identifications which arise in specific times and locations – as a 'West Indian', then as 'an immigrant', and then as 'black'. Hall reflects:

The trouble is that the instant one learns to be 'an immigrant', one recognizes one can't be an immigrant any longer: it isn't a tenable place to be. I then went through the long, important, political education of discovering that I am 'black'.

(Hall 1996c, p. 116)

Similarly, he tells Les Back, 'I'd never called myself black ever in my life, nor did most people ... lots of people who were black did not think of themselves in the way in which people after the late '60s came to think of themselves as black. So it was a discovery for me ... and a rediscovery of the black subject' (this issue).

Of course, as Hall himself has argued, "black" has never just been there either', and through his involvement from the 1980s onwards with a range of iconoclastic black and Asian visual artists, photographers and filmmakers, – 'the third generation black British' (1996b, p. 501) – Hall has explored the shifting and creative contours of the black British diaspora, and his own diasporic formation: 'Ever since the '80s I've been writing about questions of cultural identity and a lot of work in that area has been carried out in the visual arts by minority communities' (in Taylor 2006). Hall has suggested that his influential ideas around representation, difference and new ethnicities arose out of this encounter, 'I was writing about identity and they were practising it ... It made me more alert to the way artistic work is exploratory space in which ideas work themselves out' (in Jaggi 2000), yet perhaps even more significant is the impact of his personal and intellectual support in helping black artists find space and recognition. Isaac Julien has spoken of 'the freeing up of positions from which black artists and film-makers can speak' (Julien & Nash

1996, p. 481), while Gilane Tawadros reflects 'At a time when art institutions were trying to bottle up what it meant to be black British or Asian British . . . Stuart said that experience, and its artistic expression, are more ambivalent; they draw on many things. He paved the way for the confidence of a new generation of artists' (in Jaggi 2000).

Writing race: from 'The Young Englanders' to 'The Multicultural Question'

Hall's academic writing on race reflects and defines these transitions in both his personal identity and the broader social, political and cultural context in which they unfold. It is important to recognize, of course, that one of Hall's most significant achievements has been to insist on the internality of race in all social processes and, in turn, to see race as a lens through which broader structures can be explored, rather than a 'thing' in and of itself (Lewis 2000, Grossberg 2007). Grossberg quotes Hall, 'I have never worked on race and ethnicity as a kind of subcategory. I have always worked on the whole social formation which is racialized' (2007, p. 101). However, and with these caveats in mind, one can broadly identify three phases in Hall's writing on race: the early engagement with the new immigrant 'West Indian' communities and the emerging 'second generation'; the turn to theory during his time at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies; and the 'cultural turn' from the mid-1980s, which has two distinct, but interconnected themes – the shift in black cultural politics in Britain and debates around 'new ethnicities'; and the theorization of post-coloniality and diaspora, in particular in relation to the Caribbean.

Contrary to popular accounts, Hall's intellectual encounter with the newly arrived 'West Indian' community precedes his seminal intervention in *Policing the Crisis* by over a decade, and takes shape during his time with the New Left. Hall himself has commented that during this formative period, 'I always had problems in that period about the pronoun "we" . . . I did have a diasporic "take" on my position in the New Left. Even if I was not then writing about the diaspora, or writing about black politics . . . I looked at the British political scene very much as somebody who had a different formation' (1996b, pp. 493–494) (see Schwarz 2007). Hall has argued that his interest in 'race' at this period was refracted through his, and others, predominant focus on class, and that 'the black cause, the politics that arises from race is not an autonomous arena to which you could relate until . . . the mid 60s' (see Hall's interview, this issue). However, as Grossberg has persuasively argued, Hall's 'career has been consistently involved with questions of race and racism' (2007, p. 101), from the New-Left critique of Marxism through the lens of imperialism and anti-colonial struggle to the early publications such as 'Black Britons'.

In 1967 in *The Young Englanders* and again in 1970 in 'Black Britons', Hall began to explore the experiences of the newly arrived settlers. His focus, one which was to define his work (though in different ways) in later years, was on black young people and their place within a post-colonial nation; on the mutual exchange and understandings of immigrant and host. In *The Young Englanders*, Hall writes:

Race is a collective concept. Essentially, race relations are relations between groups of people rather than individuals; relationships in which the personal exchanges between individuals are mediated through and affected by the whole body of stereotyped attitudes and beliefs which lie between one group and another ... Already the young immigrant is trying to span the gap between Britain and home ... There is the identity which belongs to the part of him that is West Indian, or Pakistani or Indian ... there is also the identity of 'the young Englishman' toward which every new experience beckons ... somehow he must learn to reconcile his two identities and make them one. But many of the avenues into wider society are closed to him ... The route back is closed. But so too is the route forward.

(Hall 1967, quoted in Lewis 2000, pp. 194–195)

It is interesting, and a little surprising, to read here the traces of the then dominant 'race relations' paradigm (Solomos & Back 1996), and the notion of black youth as stranded 'between two cultures' (perhaps suffused with a hint of Dubois' 'double consciousness'). However, it is also possible to see the beginnings of Hall's later focus on issues of representation, on practices of racist exclusion, and his insistence on the right/necessity to belong to the new nation. His focus too is on the strategies of resistance and agency employed by young black people themselves:

the young immigrants I have met in the last year or two are falling back on their own reserves ... There is a pride and independence among these youngsters which is a tribute to their resilience, their capacity to survive, their determination to respect and honour not only themselves but also their families, home countries, culture, prowess and achievements.

(Quoted in Lewis 2000, p. 195)

As Lewis has argued, this early work establishes the parameters of Hall's thinking that were to remain consistent in his later writing on race – the focus on the 'conjunctural' and the 'contingent'. The former focuses on the intersection of social, cultural, economic and political social relations (Lewis 2000, Grossberg 2007) within particular historical (and spatial, see Keith, this issue) locations, the latter on processes of identity construction and creativity. Lewis writes, 'These two "poles" are brought together on the terrain of

culture which, for him, is the site of struggle over meaning – not just of the abstracted sign but also of the “real” of lived experience’ (2000, pp. 195–196).¹⁴

Hall’s crucial intervention into racial discourse in the 1970s, the collaboratively authored¹⁵ *Policing the Crisis* (Hall *et al.* 1978), takes up one ‘pole’ of this interest, focusing on the moral panic around ‘mugging’ and race. The text, which foreshadows many of the themes of the influential *The Empire Strikes Back* collection (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982) also generated from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, is crucial in shifting the focus of research away from ideas of assimilation, integration and ‘the immigrant problem’ towards a recognition of the role of discourse, representation and its implications for the emerging ‘law and order society’ that was to trigger large scale black resistance in the 1980s (see Harris this issue and Keith, this issue). While this is Hall’s first (and only) sustained empirically grounded study of issues around race, it reflects a distinct shift in approach and tone from the earlier work, in particular in what might be termed the turn to theory. The influence of Hall’s encounter with the work of Gramsci and Althusser at the Centre are clear, with the focus very strongly on the role of the state and the media in framing ideologies of national and racial crisis. The object of study here, then, is not ‘race’, ‘black communities’ or even ‘mugging’ but the way in which these serve as emblematic of discourses of broader social, cultural, political and economic crisis in 1970s Britain (Grossberg 2007, p. 107). The authors write:

This book started out with ‘mugging’, but it has ended in a different place . . . [It] is also about a society which is slipping into a certain kind of *crisis*. It tries to examine why and how the themes of race, crime and youth – condensed into the image of ‘mugging’ – also come to serve as the articulator of the crisis, its ideological conductor. It is also about how these themes have functioned as a mechanism for the construction of an authoritarian consensus, a conservative backlash: what we call the slow build up to a ‘soft’ law-and-order society.

(Hall *et al.* 1978, pp. vii–viii)

Policing the Crisis is a text which brings together, and pivots on, a range of Hall’s writing across different areas; it is, for example, an extension of his work on media (most notably the seminal piece ‘Encoding and decoding’ first drafted as a working paper in 1973), and can be fruitfully read alongside the earlier co-edited *Resistance through Rituals* (Hall & Jefferson 1976) which shares the concerns with youth and moral panics, with subcultural formation and resistance and with the shift from a society defined by consensus to one structured by crisis and coercion (Procter 2004). It also acts as an important (and, with hindsight, prescient) precursor to the themes around authoritarian

populism and the critique of 'new racism' and discourses of 'Little Englander' nationalism that were to characterize Hall's next set of interventions around Thatcherism (Hall 1988) and 'New Times' (Hall & Jacques 1989). However, the text also stands as part of a series of pieces written in this period which are concerned to theorize race, most importantly as a socially and historically constructed category, formed in articulation with other constructions (around gender and, importantly, class).¹⁶ *Racism and Reaction* (1978),¹⁷ 'Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance' (1980) and 'Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity' (1986) set out Hall's ongoing concerns with the *meanings* of race and the *work* that race is made to do in particular sites (see Goldberg, this issue, for a discussion of the significance of this work in the South African context).¹⁸

It is from the late 1980s onwards that a marked shift between 'poles', from the 'conjunctural' to the 'contingent' (Lewis 2000) can be identified in Hall's work. This turn to culture and identity, which in some ways hearkens back to Hall's earliest concerns around the role of subjectivity, agency and resistance, has often been seen as a break in his thought, or articulated (as by Sivanandan 1990) as a betrayal of the struggle against racism – as being too celebratory, too postmodern and apolitical (Mills 2007) (see St Louis, this issue, for a discussion of the politics of Hall's work). This phase in Hall's thinking nevertheless maps an important shift in the ways in which black identity and politics is thought and done, one which reflects the breakdown in a unified black political identity from the mid-1980s onwards (Hall 2000b), and saw the emergence of new black subjectivities in film, photography, art, music and literature. Hall has described this shift as the move from 'Identity Politics One' (1991), the war of manoeuvre, to 'the politics of difference', a war of position; or from 'the relations of representation' to 'the politics of representation' (1992). The (re)turn to culture and ethnicity as the terrain of struggle over meanings is, of course, reminiscent of some of the early Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies views of subcultures as a way of winning space, though with an eye, post-Thatcher, to the role of globalization, consumerism and the 'revolution of the subject' that, alongside the retreat to local, nationalist and imperialist impulses, defines these 'New Times'. Alongside this British oriented focus, this period also saw Hall's attention to issues of globalization, post-coloniality and diaspora, which has seen a revisiting, often through an autobiographical lens, of his relationship with Caribbean history and culture. The notion of diaspora, in particular has enabled Hall to contest the resurgence of narrow and inward looking versions of British identity, and to connect with his own personal historical and intellectual journey (see also Yasmeen Narayan's and Hazel Carby's papers, this issue).

Hall wrote over a dozen articles on identity in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Procter 2004), the majority of which took issues of race, ethnicity,

post-coloniality and diaspora as their primary subject. Through a series of programmatic interventions, perhaps most particularly in 'Minimal Selves' ([1987] 1996c), 'New Ethnicities' ([1988] 1992), 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' (1990) and 'When was the Postcolonial?' (1996e), Hall has definitively, irrevocably, transformed the way in which identities are thought, with the focus on indeterminacy, contingency, subjectivity, multiplicity and agency, on 'becoming' not 'being', on difference and '*différance*'. As Roxy Harris has argued (this issue) Hall's interventions have inspired a generation of (often minority) academics and researchers to explore the complex experiences and performances of Britain's black communities, theoretically and empirically, and minority communities to claim space (see David Parker and Miri Song's paper, this issue).

However, this view of identity has not only assumed the status of theoretical doxa within the academy regardless of discipline (Alexander 2002, Alleyne 2002), it has impacted widely in terms of policy and political rhetoric, with the ex-Prime Minister, the Home Office and the Commission for Racial Equality all proclaiming and celebrating our multiple identities (usually at the expense of addressing issues of equality or social justice). It is in this arena that the dangers of the consumption and commodification of Hall's interventions is most apparent and most troubling. It is also true that alongside the ubiquity of this work has come a stripping out of many of its most disruptive and critical (in both senses) insights in the way it has been understood and utilized. The familiarity of these works and their evocative phrases – the idea of identities 'without guarantees', the 'end of innocence', 'the process of becoming' – have become banal, even platitudinous, though repetition and dislocation from the wider texts and the broader context of Hall's work, politics and ethics (see St Louis, this issue, Scott 2005). The insistence on the role of the psychological and the autobiographical, on the one hand and the historical and political on the other hand both open up, and anchor, identities in important ways – 'Identity is formed at the unstable point where the "unspeakable" stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture' (Hall [1987] 1996c, p. 115) (see Yasmeen Narayan's paper, this issue). As Carby demonstrates powerfully in her paper in this issue, this is a space of discomfort, of violence, of silences, of struggle, not the position of privileged and authorized speech (see also Michael Keith's and Parker and Song's papers, this issue).

Illumination for dark times

Hall himself has recently expressed frustration at the ways in which the 'new ethnicities' debate has been taken up and employed in the academy as a form of theoretical orthodoxy. In an interview with David Scott, he has observed wryly that 'people sometimes misunderstand what I'm saying. They don't think they

disagree with me as much as they do' (cited in Grossberg 2007, p. 100). At a seminar on ethnicity and identity held in June 2006 as part of the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC's) (rather belated) programme on *Identities and Social Action*, Hall commented that 'new ethnicities' was for him:

an intervention in a particular moment of a paradigm. That's all it is, that's all I do – raid a paradigm at a particular moment and try to either crystallise or shift the way of thinking about a problem which is going on. Or more frequently try to kick the paradigm in a certain direction. Althusser once called it 'bending the twig'.

While acknowledging the empirical importance of this space in 'deepening' understanding at the micro level, Hall went on to argue that the dislocation from broader issues of social justice and political action, and from the historical specificities of the present conjuncture, had limited the effectivity, and the meaning, of much of this work.

What is the relationship between the mobilisation or performance of racialised and other forms of ethnicity and identity at the local, micro, more ethnographic level and the large thing that brought us into the field at the beginning, namely a racialised world . . . a world in which material and symbolic resources continue to be deeply unequally distributed. Why are you in this field if you are not concerned about that?

Twenty years on from his 'new ethnicities' intervention, Hall was insistent on the new contours of the current, post-Millennial moment – the issue of asylum, the racialization of new migrant communities, the end of multiculturalism, the rise of new forms of global imperialism, the War on Terror and the re-emergence of religious identities (see Hall's interview, this issue) – and the need for 'somebody else that's going to come and lean against the tide, bend the twig the other way and try to move the thinking on'.

The relative optimism of the 'new ethnicities' moment has undoubtedly been superseded in the current climate of fear, religio-ethnic entrenchment and the resurgent assimilationist nationalism of twenty-first century Britain. Hall has commented 'I think things are stuck. I am not so disillusioned as to think history is finished. But I do think that . . . the balance of social forces are very powerfully against hope' (Taylor 2006). More personally he notes, 'I think for the first time I feel like a dinosaur . . . The points of reference that organized my political world and my political hopes are not around any more' (Taylor 2006). Nevertheless, the power of Hall's thinking, and of his strategic interventions into the contemporary terrain – his ability to keep on bending the twig – is clearly discernible in some of his most recent discussions around multiculturalism; for example in 'The Multicultural Question' (2000a) and his guiding hand in *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (Parekh 2000). In these, Hall

has reiterated many of the consistent themes of his more recent work – the problems of living with difference in contemporary, globalized societies, the dislocation of traditional hegemonic narratives of nation, history and citizenship, the ‘transruptive’ voices of the margins in the centre, and the role of the everyday in performing and displacing social, cultural, political and economic structures. Present too is his longstanding concern with the constitutive role of power, of discourse, of social inequality, of violence that constrains and distorts the possibilities of the multicultural as a positive generative space of difference (see also Hall’s interview, this issue). Hall thus contrasts the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* in 1998 and the pronouncements of the Macpherson Enquiry in 1999 into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence as ‘paradigmatic of the contradictory state of British multiculturalism’ (2000a, p. 238).

Hall’s interventions remain key to understanding the contemporary formation of ‘race’ in Britain and its diasporas, as they have done for over four decades. It would be invidious, and premature, to attempt to finally assess the impact of this work, particularly in a context which is constantly transforming, throwing up new questions and conflicts, and on which – as the interview with Les Back powerfully illustrates – Hall himself remains such an influential and prescient commentator. However, Hall’s insistence on the historical specificities of racial formation, on its articulation with other forms of identification, on the inseparability of culture from social, economic and political structures and of agency from the wider forces in which they are enmeshed, are insights which retain the power to enlighten, challenge and provoke – to illuminate these dark times.

The papers

This special issue, both as a collection and as individual pieces, should then be seen less as an attempt to provide an exhaustive or definitive commentary on Hall’s contribution to theorizing ‘race’ than as a series of interventions into, or dialogues with, this work – a way perhaps of using Hall’s conceptual toolbox to lever open new insights and illuminate new questions. The papers are ordered to broadly mirror the development of Hall’s engagement with ‘race’, beginning with the emergence of British Cultural Studies, through the early theoretical interventions around Gramsci and the concept of articulation, to the later crucial explorations of ‘new ethnicities’, ‘the multicultural’ and diaspora.

In his opening paper, Roxy Harris questions the absences around ‘race’ in the emergence of British Cultural Studies, and explores the ‘strategic silences’ that marked Hall’s inheritance from Williams, Hoggart and Thompson. As Hall himself has acknowledged, the early focus on class and nation in cultural studies

effectively erased the presence of ethnic minorities in the landscape of post-war Britain – he comments to Back (this issue) that ‘they were very anxious about imperialism but they didn’t understand that the black presence within Britain would be a transformatory presence’ – and it was only reluctantly, and in the face of often fraught encounters with gendered and raced difference under Hall’s tenancy as head of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, that partial transformation was achieved. Harris argues, however, that this transformation coincided with the literary turn, which has rendered black and brown people as texts rather than agents, and it is only in more recent years that the ethnographic traditions of cultural studies have been reclaimed, and engaged with black and brown Britons as subjects. Nevertheless, Harris acknowledges the powerful influence of Hall’s legacy on this new generation of empirical research, and explores the impact of this legacy on his own work on black and minority ethnic youth and language use (Harris 2006).

In a richly empirical and historically grounded piece, David Goldberg engages in a dialogue with some of Hall’s key early theorizations in an exploration of the articulation of race and religion in the South African context. Taking as a starting point Hall’s seminal reflections on ‘Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance’ (1980), which took apartheid South Africa as its focus, and ‘Gramsci’s Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity’ (1986), Goldberg extends (and contests) Hall’s account of articulation to explore the specific racial formation of ‘modern apartheid’ and its ‘afterlife’. Where Hall’s focus was primarily on the complex articulation of race and class, Goldberg’s challenge is to explore the articulation of race and religion as a form of what he terms ‘political theology’, centred on the sacralization of race. The focus here is on the role of religious ideology and institutions in the formation of apartheid’s structures, in its resistance and its traces in the new South African nation. Goldberg’s provocations to Hall are especially timely given the latter’s own reflections on the role of faith in the current conjuncture – Hall comments wryly to Back ‘This is a new phase and it’s a phase particularly difficult for people on the left because of religion . . . and because we’ve never understood religion, and because our secular sociological selves thought it was going to go away . . . So culture has taken its revenge on our failure to understand history’ (Hall’s interview, this issue).

In his contribution, Michael Keith explores the shifts in Hall’s thinking on race through the lens of ‘the city’. Although Hall himself has never written directly on the notion of ‘the city’ or urban social theory, Keith argues that ideas of ‘the urban’ are central to Hall’s conceptualization of the racial and multicultural landscape as a space of freedom and sequestration – the city provides what Keith terms both the horizon of the political imaginary and the stage of political action. Through three key moments in his writing in the past three decades – *Policing the Crisis* (Hall *et al.* 1978), ‘New Ethnicities’ ([1988] 1992) and ‘The Multicultural Question’ (2000a) – Keith examines the

ambivalences, challenges and tensions in Hall's imagination of 'the city' as a theoretical and empirical space of difference, and uses these insights in a provocative exploration of the contemporary cosmopolitan cityscape of London. For Keith, London captures and exemplifies the contrasts and incommensurabilities of a space shot through with material, political and ethical imperatives and contradictions, embracing the new and the global alongside trenchant geographies of inequality and local intolerance. In his later work, Keith notes, Hall speaks 'to the political imperative to understand the city's contradictory cartographies'.

Keith's paper is important too in exploring some of the continuities and shifts between Hall's earlier and more recent writing on 'race', through the turn to culture and identity. It is perhaps unsurprising, given the impact of Hall's work on identity, 'new ethnicities' and diaspora in the past 20 years, that the bulk of the papers in this issue address these concerns, although in very different ways and settings. The next three contributions, by Brett St Louis, David Parker and Miri Song, and Yasmeen Narayan, all engage with the implications of Hall's work for understanding identity in Britain in the contemporary landscape – 20 years after Hall's original paradigm-shattering 'new ethnicities' intervention.

Brett St Louis' paper engages theoretically with the moral and political imperatives of Hall's crucial intervention in 'new ethnicities'. Taking up Hall's pronouncements on the tension between the 'impossibility' and 'necessity' of identity formation, St Louis' paper explores the consequences of thinking identity in the current moment through the productive and ambivalent tensions inherent in this dichotomy. St Louis places his discussion in the context of the current challenges for identity – in particular around the emergence of religious-cultural identities in London's East End (also the site of Keith's cosmopolitan city), through a critical re-reading of the Dench, Gavrion and Young (2005) book *The New East End*. He argues persuasively that while identity as a 'necessity' poses a series of potential traps, it also can be mobilized as a 'vehicular idea' when bound to a broader progressive politics, 'urging us to think, calling us to account and asking us to act accordingly'.

David Parker and Miri Song's paper also explores Hall's concept of 'new ethnicities' through the contemporary site of internet communities – what they term 'new ethnicities online'. Drawing on their recent research on British Chinese online communities, Parker and Song bring this material into dialogue with Hall's interventions, to explore both the re-sedimentation of identities in the contemporary political landscape, and the ways in which these are challenged and subverted through virtual landscapes and online subjectivities. At the same time, the paper explores the reinvigoration and translation of diasporic sensibilities on the internet, the creation of new online (and offline) communities across a geographically dispersed group, and the connections with an emergent Chinese superpower. As with St Louis' piece, Parker and Song's paper points to

the mobilization of online sensibilities into political action offline, although they acknowledge that 'these interactions and political interventions have thus far been mostly episodic and reactive, with short-lived after-effects'.

Parker and Song's paper also builds on Hall's seminal works on diaspora identities, if out of a very different history and in a very different time and (cyber)space than his own focus on the Caribbean identity. In his interview, Hall explores with Back how his engagement with British politics and with black British communities arises out of his diasporic identity and his feeling that 'Diaspora is a loss ... being displaced, or out of place, is a characteristic experience of mine'. Emerging out of Hall's powerful interventions into the formation of Caribbean identities, both 'at home' and abroad (particularly in Britain), Yasmeen Narayan's and Hazel Carby's contributions to this issue are both centrally concerned with the creation of Caribbean diaspora identities.

Yasmeen Narayan's piece is engaged centrally with the formation of Caribbean identities in new political spaces and times, a generation after those young men whom Hall taught in south London, and whose confident occupation of space so intrigued him in 'Minimal Selves'. Through the story and voice of one informant, Jamal, Narayan dialogues with Hall's work on identity to explore the changing psychological, political and affective dimensions of the Caribbean diaspora experience in Britain. Literally 'fleshing out' Hall's influential pronouncements on identities, Narayan's piece both illustrates and extends Hall's analysis to explore the inscription – the carving – of the Jamal's subjectivity in encounters with multiple others in intimate spaces and imagined political communities.

In his interview, Hall comments that 'out-of-placeness is inevitably a condition of the diaspora, but is strangely enough a condition of the Caribbean too, which is of course a diaspora, because everybody who is there came from somewhere else'. Hazel Carby's elegiac piece takes up some of Narayan's concerns and moves to explore this 'out-of-placeness' in her discussion of Caribbean identity. Moving seamlessly in time – from the life of Olaudah Equiano to her own post-war British upbringing – and in place – across the Black Atlantic in the literature of George Lamming or Maryse Conde to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and finally to Tilbury Docks and the start of the Windrush period – Carby traces the histories, movements and memories of racial encounters. In close dialogue with Hall's work on diaspora, on post-coloniality and on Caribbean identity, Carby's paper tells the complex mutual story of British and Caribbean identities in an exploration of notions of belonging, exclusion and citizenship which resonates with Hall's own life-long project of contesting absolutist British national identities, and which posits an alternative narrative of Britishness – a theme which retains its urgency in the current moment.

Many of the issues raised in these contributions are addressed by the final piece – an interview with Stuart Hall himself by Les Back. In this extended conversation, Hall reflects on his intellectual history, from his early days in

Oxford to his contribution to inIVA (the Institute of International Visual Arts, which opened in early 2008), and explores the challenges of the current conjuncture. The interview also allows us a glimpse into Hall's continuing intellectual, political and ethical insights, interspersed with moments of startling honesty and suffused with laughter, and testifying to Hall's continuing power and presence.

Notes

- 1 Scott writes 'For what is important in the theorization of any conjuncture is not only whether it is possible to identify the question to which the proposition addresses itself as an answer, but whether that question continues to be a question worth having answers to' (2000, p. 283).
- 2 See Grossberg (2007) for a discussion on Hall's 'materialist method'.
- 3 See Farred (2007) for a discussion of 'the Popular Arts' in the broader context of Hall's work.
- 4 Martin Jacques has described Stuart Hall as 'one of the finest orators on the left, or anywhere, a cross between Jesse Jackson and the best academic you ever heard' (1997, cited in Davis 2004, p. 1).
- 5 See Bill Schwarz's (2005) article on Rojek's book for a further discussion of these issues.
- 6 See Harris, this issue for a discussion of the emergence of cultural studies and its erasure of 'race'.
- 7 See Paul Gilroy (1987, 1996) for a powerful critique of some of the ideological shortcomings of the early Cultural Studies paradigm around issues of race and nation.
- 8 Although this, again, is a development Hall himself has ambivalent feelings about, 'I never defended it as a field. I think that as a field it contains a lot of rubbish' (Taylor 2006).
- 9 'Culture, Politics, Race and Diaspora: The Thought of Stuart Hall' Centre for Caribbean Thought, UWI, Mona 17–19 June 2004. Some key papers from this conference were published in the 2007 collection of the same name, edited by Brian Meeks (Ian Randall and Lawrence & Wishart).
- 10 See David Scott's (2000) article on 'The Permanence of Pluralism' for a critical take on this issue.
- 11 See Hall's interview with Les Back, this issue, for a discussion of some of these early encounters.
- 12 Schwarz comments further 'It isn't only the Caribbean that falls beyond Rojek's field of vision; it is his subject's blackness too' (2005, p. 199).
- 13 In 1964 Tory candidate Peter Griffiths unseated a long-standing, pro-immigration Labour MP with the unofficial slogan 'If you want a nigger neighbour, vote Labour' (Solomos 2003).
- 14 It is also interesting to consider this early intervention in the light of two criticisms of Hall's work on 'race' – firstly, that he privileges the textual and abstract over the empirical/lived (see Harris, this issue), and secondly that

- his supposed distance from 'the black community' has led him to romanticize black struggle (Rojek 2003).
- 15 With Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts.
 - 16 Hall's ideas around 'articulation' are importantly developed and explored in relation to gender and class by Hazel Carby and Paul Gilroy in *The Empire Strikes Back* (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982).
 - 17 'Racism and Reaction' was a series of five articles published by the Commission for Racial Equality and broadcast on BBC radio in 1978.
 - 18 See Charles W. Mills (2007) paper on 'Stuart Hall's Changing Representations of Race' for a critical discussion of Hall's shifts in race theorizing.

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